

## **AMHERST COUNCIL ON AGING MINUTES**

### **January 13, 2005**

**Members Present:** Jean Haggerty, Chair; Doris Holden, Treasurer; Elsie Fetterman, Joan Keochakian, Barbara Sutherland, Hank Peirce

**Absent:** Susan Whitbourne, Frank Lattuca, Al Byam

**Staff Present:** Nancy Pagano (Interim Director/Program Director), Maura Plante (Program Director/Services), Karen Erman (Management Assistant), Marlene Barnett (Program Coordinator)

**Others:** Rosemary Kofler, Julie Federman, RN (Public Health Nurse.), Epi Bodhi (Health Director)

#### **Welcome**

Meeting called to order at 9:09 AM. Jean welcomed all members and guests wishing all a Happy New Year.

#### **Minutes of Meeting**

Minutes of December 2, 2004, were reviewed and accepted as written.

### **SENIOR TRUST**

#### **Treasurer's Report:**

Doris Holden reported that the Nursing Care has been paid through December. The balance remaining to pay for nursing care is approximately \$4,500. The balance in the checking account is \$3,722.20. The total assets are \$86,318.79. A \$50.00 donation came in for the van account and there was one check written for scholarships. The total amount received for the van solicitation is \$4,182.

Elsie asked what the van funds have been used for. Nancy briefly stated that the drivers are paid from the fund as well as driver training expenses, the tent, a battery charger, and maintenance of the van. Nancy stated that the balance in this account is not known at this time as the town accounting department has made an error. This problem will be straightened out soon.

Nancy asked Doris why the CD is not at a higher rate. Doris stated that this was a comparable rate at the time the CD came due, and she will check out other banks in March when the CD comes due again.

Jean questioned the \$10,000 received each year in March from the anonymous donor. It is not known at this time if this is going to continue. An inquiry of the donor will be made in March by someone yet to be decided.

The Treasurer's Report was accepted as written.

### **NURSING SERVICES**

#### **Nursing Center Update:**

A Nursing Center update was given by Julie Federman RN, Public Health Nurse, regarding the transition from Senior Center supervision to the Health Department. Julie has been meeting with Cheryl Smith, the Nursing Center Director and has visited during one of Cheryl's clinics. Julie reported that Cheryl is seeing mostly on-going clients with diabetes, weight management and high blood pressure. Julie wants to change the direction to a more diverse client base. She wants to see the Nursing Center as referral system based instead of an on-going supportive system. Julie needs to collect further statistics to find out who is going to the clinic, chronic cases or more defined. Also, the Health Department is focusing on language, cultural and money barriers with the Nursing Center. There needs to be a comprehensive needs assessment and then build from there. Elsie suggested that nursing students be used to help with a needs assessment. Joan asked whether there ever was a needs assessment done. Julie said that this was not initially done and it should have been.

#### **Nursing Grant for Ann Whalen Apartments:**

Epi Bodhi, Health Director, asked about the new Nursing Center at Ann Whalen and how this program is going to affect the Nursing Center here and if there will be any interfacing. Jean stated that the Ann Whalen program is a "Wellness Program". Her main focus is to get services brought to Ann Whalen residents because many of them are elderly. In August a proposal was submitted to Highland Valley. The proposal was funded and Ann Whalen received \$4,200 to run the program. They have four student nurses and one instructor to oversee the students. The program will be held every Monday beginning January 31<sup>st</sup> from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM. The program will be more informational and will sometimes include such things as videos. Besides seniors, there are others who live at Ann Whalen who are under 60 years of age. They will also be served by the program. The main sponsor of the

program is the Amherst Housing Authority. This program will not affect the Senior Center Nursing Program. There is no competition between the Ann Whalen program and the Senior Center program. They will be mapping their program and they will be developing a relationship with the School of Nursing to keep the program running.

Nancy stated that the Council on Aging has a Wellness Sub-Committee that could help to work on a community assessment. The Senior Center is gearing up to look at all seniors 90+ to find out what their needs are. This will begin in February with student volunteers. Julie could add to the assessment. Julie thinks that this is a good idea.

Julie reported on the flu clinic figures this flu season. She has given 210 flu shots so far this year and 250 last year. For nine years the Senior Center and the Health Dept have collaborated to run the flu clinic.

## **STAFF REPORTS**

### **“Experience Works”:**

The Experience Works Program is what used to be called “The Green Thumb Program”. This agency places low-income people into workplaces for 20 hours a week. The guidelines stipulate that the worker cannot make over \$12,000 a year. The income that the worker makes from Experience Works does not affect their housing subsidy. We have been approved for two to three people for this program. Our first Experience Works person to apply is Carol Hayward She has completed the paperwork and is awaiting her acceptance into the program. The staff will look for other people who qualify for the program.

### **Mapping:**

Nancy introduced Rosemary Kofler, a volunteer at the Senior Center, and informed COA members that she agreed to help with mapping for the Highland Valley Program. Mapping involves entering all our services into a database for Highland Valley so that all other communities in the area will know what services the Senior Center offers. We are waiting for a computer from the Town IT Dept. so that Rosemary can begin. We are thankful that Rosemary is willing to help with the mapping. Elsie stated that there is funding available for the mapping program and if you have all your services mapped there are resources available at no charge. Elsie would like someone to come in to show us all how the mapping program works.

Rosemary is also interested in becoming a COA member if there is a vacancy and will be attending the COA meetings.

### **CDBG Block Grant proposal:**

The Senior Center has sent in a proposal for money for van subsidies for elders and younger disabled persons who are particularly low income and need extra help with transportation costs above what the regular van subsidy offers. The money would replace the Florence Savings Bank grants that were special one-time gifts. Nancy met with the Amherst Public Transportation Committee and they are willing to write a letter of support for the proposal. There has been no word yet on any acceptance of the proposal.

### **Consultant Process Update:**

Nancy informed the members that Michael Letcher, former Assistant to the Town Manager in Amherst, will be coming in February to begin the first part of the consultant process. He will conduct interviews at that time. A questionnaire has been sent to the Bangs Dept. Heads and the staff is in the process of putting together responses to the questionnaire.

### **Five Year Capital Plan:**

Nancy sent an email memo to John Musante, Finance Director for the Town. The memo stated that the COA is planning on having a retreat soon to develop a consensus about a master plan for the next five years and beyond. Due to a dramatic increase in residents 65+ in the next few years, the COA’s vision will likely include the following:

- 1) An upgrade and expansion of the large activity room kitchen area so that it meets the sanitary code and is more accessible and safe for workers. New equipment for this would be commercial freezer, stoves, sinks, refrigerator and a separate sink for hand washing so that this is not in the food prep area. This will require expansion into the south part of the building which is presently a deck off room 101. This will also mean

that new storage areas for tables and chairs and grocery carts etc will need to be developed as these will be displaced.

- 2) Development of the deck area off the Senior Center lounge (this is over the top of LSSE office space on the east side of Bangs) for a comprehensive wellness center exercise area and other program space. We have to use space at St. Brigid's Parish Center now because we don't have enough room for our larger classes.
- 3) The establishment of a social day program for elders. These frailer participants need a specially designed set of activities with more hands-on supervision due to their declining capabilities. There is a need for this type of program not only for elders living independently, but also for those cared for by family members evenings and weekends and who cannot be left alone all day. Facility-wise they need a space to have quiet restful time and an area dedicated to a different level of programs and services. There would also be office space for the associated program coordinator(s).
- 4) We would like a dedicated arts and crafts area in order to expand the variety, quality, and times of the programs we offer.
- 5) We need a redesign and expansion of our office space so it can more safely accommodate the comings and goings of our disabled population.

#### **FY'06 Budget:**

Nancy stated that the FY '06 Budget Book will be distributed to Dept. Heads next week. The hearing before the Finance Committee will be coming up soon.

#### **Tax Work Off Program:**

Maura explained that the Tax Work Off Program is going well. There are now 30 available slots, 10 more than last year. Elders who live in their own home with a gross income of \$30,000 or less are eligible to work 111 hours at \$7.50 per hour and this amount will be deducted off of their real estate tax bill. Maura is working at placement of these people throughout the town departments.

#### **Students Returning:**

This semester, Susan Whitbourne's Psychology of Aging class will be volunteering at the Senior Center, along with other student volunteers. Marlene is going to help Maura with the intake of student volunteers and placing them in volunteer roles. Students are needed with cars and for friendly visitors. Joan questioned if a volunteer uses their own car, does their insurance cover? Nancy will look into this. Joan will also check with the hospice volunteers on this issue.

### **SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES**

#### **Finance**

Joan Keochakian spoke on the establishment of the "Friends of the Senior Center". The Senior Trust already has a 501C(3) account set up through the Senior Trust. What is needed is to actually get a "Friends" group of people together who are not COA members. Joan will call interested people. Some suggestions were Janice Denton, and Burt Finger. Joan will try to set up a meeting with interested people before the next COA meeting.

#### **HVES**

Barbara Sutherland reported on the January 3<sup>rd</sup> Highland Valley Elder Services meeting. Most of the meeting was devoted to JM Sorrell, Ombudsman Program director. There are 24 programs of Ombudsman in Massachusetts. The role of the Ombudsman is to receive, investigate and resolve complaints made by or on behalf of, residents of nursing and rest homes, to protect residents' rights, to provide information and to advocate for positive changes to the long term care system. Each COA member was given a pamphlet on the Long Term Care Ombudsman Program.

#### **Transportation**

Nancy reported that the problem with the back wall of the tent for the van has not been resolved. The back wall does not fit. The back wall is 16 feet wide and the company sent a 12 foot wide back so it does not fit. Both Bill Klaus of the Fire Dept and Nancy has contact the company to no avail. There has been no response. Nancy will ask the Town Manager if a letter to the company from Town Council will help to resolve the problem.

Nancy has advised the members that the money to subsidize the van tickets is gone. The Town Manager has told us to continue to sell the tickets as we have been. Nancy is going to meet with the Town Manager to discuss the

situation. A possibility is to request money from the Senior Trust. Joan stated that she will try to find some donors to keep this going for the poorer people.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Role of the COA:**

Jean began asking questions:

- Who are we as the COA?
- What do we stand for?
- How can we help staff?
- What is the COA's role? Are we fulfilling our role?

Jean stated that she has heard the concerns of the staff that they are busy, stressed and overworked. She asked the staff what the COA can do to help the staff. She asked whether some of the COA could go to meetings to help lessen the load. Should a retreat be planned for both the COA and the staff so that our roles can be more defined?

Hank Peirce asked what the by-laws of the COA state as far as some of these questions. Nancy replied that the by-laws are outdated and need to be revised. When the COA was first established there was no staff. The COA was responsible for all the duties. The COA role now needs to be redefined.

Senior Center staff are appreciative when COA members can attend meetings representing the Senior Center. Examples of these might be WMACA and MCOA. Also, Nancy welcomes COA support and advocacy during the budget process. She realizes that some members are working full-time and accommodations will be made whenever possible to include anyone interested.

Jean questioned whether Nancy needs to be on every senior trip. Nancy responded that she has met with Barry about this issue. The Senior Center runs the trips as a program of the Town and thus is legally responsible for people being safe. There are times when arrangements during the trip need to be "tweaked", there are first aid issues at times and there are transportation needs before and after each trip. Nancy tries to arrange trips whenever possible on slow days or on days or times when the Center isn't open. Staff going to meetings away from the Senior Center equally impacts the day to day operation as other staff have to cover routine demands.

Nancy reminded the COA that Marlene is only at the Senior Center part-time and temporarily. She has been of particular help to Maura in running the free bread and produce program and the intake of student volunteers. When her "loan" to us from the Dept. Public Works is over, permanent staff would have to again pick up those duties.

### **Alternate COA member:**

Jean stated that she does not think the COA needs an alternate member. As long as there are five members present (a quorum) a vote can be taken. If someone is interested in becoming a COA member when there is going to be an opening, they are welcome to come to the meetings. Elsie agreed. They already have a nominating committee that will look at prospective members and make a recommendation to the Town Manager. Nancy asked that when the COA is looking at revising the by-law to please consider the alternate member. Also, It is important to look at the by-laws in a formal way when revising.

### **Upcoming COA meetings:**

Nancy asked if the COA would like to change the day or time of the meeting to accommodate some of the members who cannot make the current day and time. Members decided to keep the current day and time until the end of the fiscal year.

### **Next Meeting is February 10, 2005 at 9:00 AM.**

### **The Retreat will be held on March 3, 2005 from 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM at Ann Whalen in the Recreation Room.**

Volunteers to plan the retreat are Jean, Doris, Elsie, Frank Alan and Susan. The staff will come to the beginning of the retreat for a routine business meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:55 AM.

